**STI’s and The Risks of Contraception**

**Grade 8**

The importance of teaching about STI’s and contraception at this age cannot be underestimated. Self- esteem issues are tied closely to the images of young people and young love they see in the movies and on television. Rarely do these media focus on the reality of sex – usually only the “romantic” ideals are embraced in love stories. Students are faced with many misconceptions about how STI’s can be contracted and the long-term consequences of them. Finally, the reality for many students still is that families do not necessarily discuss these issues openly at home and school is a natural and safe forum for healthy sexual education.

Three key things that students should take away from this lesson are:

* Reaffirmation of their importance in the eyes of God and their families – that they are unique and special and deserving of respect and that their bodies and sexuality is a gift from God
* That abstinence from sex until marriage and then sex within a faithful marriage relationship are the only sure ways to ensure safe experiences
* Clinical explanation of various STI’s and the long term effects of contracting them.

Two cautions I would keep in mind are:

1. That someone in my class may already have or have had an STI and has kept it a secret or has not had any support around the issues
2. Some students may still be too immature or at a developmental stage that is not equipped to discuss the issues appropriately

**Considerations:**

Students with special needs would have to be considered on a one to one basis depending on the need. For example a child with cognitive delay may need all the materials to be presented in a more simplified format and in private with 1:1 support and explanation so that he/she could feel free to ask questions or respond honestly without fear of peer ridicule.

Another child may simply have need of materials being chunked into smaller portions and scribing necessary to respond to written assignments.